

## CONTACT Sets Open House For New Training Program

WESTFIELD – CONTACT We Care, the crisis hotline and listening center based in Westfield, will launch its new training program with an open house at the First Baptist Church of Westfield on Wednesday, March 15.

This special orientation program will begin at 7 p.m. in the church lounge. Members of the public, particularly those interested in volunteer service to the community, are invited to attend. Light refreshments will be available.

The event will include introductory remarks on the agency's role in the local community, a basic introduction to "CONTACT Listening" and an orientation to both the agency's new flexible training program and its conventional 12-week training class.

The weekly class will kick off at the same location on Wednesday, March 22, and continue most Wednesdays at 7 p.m. through June 14.

The Flexible Training program was created to suit the busy, complicated calendars of those who want to volunteer but may not be able to commit to a rigid schedule. The new program matches interested volunteers with mentors and allows the trainees, essentially, to create their own sched-

ules for completing most of the training.

CONTACT volunteers field over 8,000 calls a year from individuals in emotional distress in a primary service area that covers Union, Essex, Middlesex, Somerset, Morris, Bergen and Passaic Counties. It is part of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – (800) 273-TALK.

CONTACT is an agency of the Westfield United Way and several other United Way agencies and is supported additionally by grants from private and public foundations, corporations and individuals.

### BOE to Review Budget Proposals

WESTFIELD – The Westfield Board of Education will review proposals included in the 2006-2007 school district budget at its Tuesday, March 7 meeting at 8 p.m. at 302 Elm Street. The public is welcomed to attend. Meetings are also televised on TV-36 on Tuesdays at 8 a.m., 3 and 11 p.m. and Thursdays at 8 a.m. and 7 p.m., Saturdays at 3 p.m. and Sundays at 10 a.m.

## A Letter to the Editor

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### There Are So Many Questions But There Are Too Few Answers

Recently, I heard of a Union County resident who made a request of the freeholders for financial reports for 2005 and the 2006 county budget. What he received back to his simple request were instructions to file an OPRA form and a two-page dissertation, obviously prepared by the county information department, blaming everyone and his cousin, except the freeholders, for escalating county taxes. There was also a glowing, but wordy, report of what they were doing to address the budget including a hiring freeze, program cuts, installing vending machines and increasing fees to use certain county facilities.

However, many questions remain unanswered, such as: Why is the budget \$413 million? Why do they expect to spend \$1.13 billion a day? Why has the county tax levied increased an average of 10 percent per year for the last five years? Why did they vote themselves a 5.3 percent raise but are suggesting layoffs of non-political appointee workers? Why did the county manager get a vehicle that has higher gas consumption than the one he had? Why do so many county employees still have use of county vehicles 24 hours a day along with free gas? Why is Union County \$38 million in debt? Why is there more than \$10 million in the proposed budget for overtime costs? How are they going to control operating costs at Rumlles Hospital, which is again running in the red? Why won't they oppose additional taxpayer funding of the freight line running through the county? Why have only eight out of 19 state recommendations for repairs at the Juvenile Detention Center been completed after a year? Why have three of Union County's young adults died of medical neglect in two and half years at our county correc-

tional facilities? Why has the county faced so many lawsuits by employees? Why have numerous suits been settled with taxpayer dollars, and why didn't insurance cover these settlements? Why does it seem that we have to build something on all open-space acquisitions? Why are open-space dollars used for questionable brick and mortar projects? Why is it that taxpayer-funded mass mailings containing updates of county government activities always come out just prior to the primary and general elections? Why do these mailings, paid for with tax dollars, feature the incumbents who are running for reelection? Why is it that during the public comment section of freeholder meetings it is frowned upon to ask questions? Why does the county counsel's office say that OPRA requests are not intended to get answers to questions? Why is it so hard to get a question answered? Why is it that the agendas for freeholder meetings are not available to the public until minutes or seconds before the meeting starts? Why is it that if a resident asks to view the county check register, they are only shown one when two actually exist? Why does the county pay a monthly retainer to a marketing firm and not have a marketing plan available for public inspection? Why do three state legislators appear on the county payroll as full time county employees? And when are the freeholders going to take a serious position on pay-to-play in Union County?

So many questions and too few answers coming forth from a board that holds no one responsible or accountable for their actions, least of all themselves.

Patricia Quattrocchi Garwood

## Fanwood Recreation Lists Calendar of Spring Courses

FANWOOD – The Fanwood Recreation Commission has revealed its spring line-up of programs. With the completion of the Forest Road Park building, including a fully commercial kitchen, the commission was able to expand its roster of programs and classes for all ages. The offerings include:

**Videography for the Amateur:** George Weiss of Channel 35 will be the instructor for three one-hour sessions on Wednesdays, March 15, 22 and 29, from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at the Fanwood Community House. The cost is \$50 for all three sessions. The course will cover improving one's videography skills, avoiding common errors and basic editing.

**Yoga for Beginners:** A six-session class for adults at Forest Road Park, will be held on Mondays from 7 to 8 p.m. beginning March 13. The fee for all six sessions is \$50 and drop-ins also can be accommodated.

**Scrapbooking:** This one-night event will take place Wednesday, March 29, from 7 to 9 p.m. at LaGrande Park. Participants are asked to bring their photos in a bag to be sorted and organized during the program. The \$25 fee includes a mini sort box that holds 600 photographs and a photo labeling pencil.

**Scrapbooking Workshop:** This ongoing workshop, featuring Creative Memories workshop tools, is for all current scrapbookers or anyone who wants to begin. Each week there will be a "Crop Talk" presentation on techniques. Five sessions will be held starting Tuesday, April 18, from 7 to 9 p.m. at Forest Road Park. The fee is \$30 per student.

**Introduction to Photography**

**with Digital Cameras:** In this six-session course for ages 16 and up, professional Herb Way will teach the basics of photography and the use of digital cameras. The sessions will begin Wednesday, March 15, and take place from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at Forest Road Park. The fee is \$75.

**Skin Care Workshop:** Instructor Tricia Gaglias, a board certified esthetician and salon/spa owner, will show women how to take care of their skin and how to postpone the onset of aging. This two-part program will be offered Wednesdays, April 12 and 19, from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at LaGrande Park. The fee is \$20 each session.

**Knitting:** Participants will learn how to cast on, knit, purl, increase, decrease and cast off stitches and have the option to knit a sampler scarf. The instructor will provide knitting needles and yarn for the first class and a short list of materials to purchase. The five sessions, for ages 13 and up, will begin Thursday, March 23, and take place from 7:30 to 9 p.m. at LaGrande Park. There is a \$50 fee.

Additionally, a four-lesson knitting course for children ages eight to 12 will begin Tuesday, March 21, from 4 to 5 p.m. at LaGrande Park. The instructor will provide knitting needles and yarn for the first class and a short list of materials to purchase. The fee is \$40.

**Comic Book Illustration:** Individuals will learn how to illustrate their own comic book from a former Marvel Comic Books illustrator. This five-session course, for ages 10 to adult, will be held Mondays beginning March 20, from 4 to 5 p.m. at LaGrande Park. The fee is \$50.

**Adult Ceramics:** This six-session course will begin Tuesday, March 7, from 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. at Forest Road Park. The cost is \$60. Firing and some supplies will be included.

In-person registration will be held on Saturday, March 11, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. at LaGrande Park. For more information, please call Fanwood Recreation at (908) 889-2080.

### SP Resident Graduates From Boston Univ.

SCOTCH PLAINS – Scotch Plains resident Abigail Coxson was among 1,316 Boston University graduates in January. She received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics.

### OPEN HOUSE: Sunday, March 5th 1-4 PM 424 Colonial Avenue



Westfield . . . Great location (in the Gardens) and walk to town and NYC transportation. 4 bedrooms and 4 full baths. Recent addition includes spacious family room, master bedroom, finished basement, multiple updates and amenities.

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## Turn of the Century Victorian



Vintage accents of yesteryear combine with today's modern conveniences to create this impressive 7 Bedroom 3 1/2 Bath Colonial Revival jewel. Original details include a grand entry foyer, 2 fireplaces, deep chestnut woodwork, back staircase and expansive windows. Recent improvements – Expanded eat-in Kitchen with a breakfast bar and Viking stove, custom oak woodwork, updated baths, 2nd floor laundry room, 2 heating systems, rebuilt wraparound porch and garage. A wonderful in-town location, only a short walk to Franklin and Roosevelt Schools and commuter transportation, amplifies the prestige of this Westfield treasure. Offered for \$1,450,000

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### OPEN HOUSE: Sunday, March 5, 2006 – 1 to 4 PM 18 Trails End Court, Westfield



"Better Than New" Professionally decorated and landscaped, this 5 BR, 4.1 bath Center Hall Colonial boasts a sweeping two-story entry, formal living room, elegant dining room with custom wallpaper, and extensive moldings throughout. 25' kitchen with granite counters and center island, opens to a Country French family room with fireplace and designer carpet. First floor great room, bedroom & bath. Lower level media room, exercise room and steam shower. 12 rooms total, invisible fencing, cul-de-sac location. June occupancy. \$1,599,900



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WESTFIELD OFFICE 209 CENTRAL AVENUE 908-233-5555

## Weichert

### Open House: Sun. 3/5 12-4pm



WESTFIELD . . . Exquisite brick Colonial on a cul-de-sac. This move-in condition four bedroom, 2 1/2 bath Center Hall Colonial also features a wonderful master bedroom suite, new kitchen, huge finished basement, large family room with fireplace, formal dining room, office and other amenities. Located between Manor Park Swim Club and Sycamore Field, this wonderful opportunity is offered for \$985,000. DIR: Central to Sycamore 1<sup>st</sup> It on Ripley 1<sup>st</sup> It on Boynton #1003 (052000908)

Call For More Information!



Invite Kerry in, and he'll bring results!

Kerry McDevitt  
weichert.com

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## Weichert

### Open House: Sun. 3/5 12-4pm



WESTFIELD . . . Pristine and charming Colonial could be your dream come true. This beautiful three bedroom home with glistening hardwood floors has been well-maintained and updated including kitchen and bathroom, newer finished basement, rear mudroom with exterior door to deck and fabulous fenced in backyard, newer furnace, HWH, front steps & sidewalk, driveway with Belgian blocking, updated 200 AMP electric service and newer sewer/water line to street. It is located only a short distance to town and the train, and down the street is a playground & town pool. DIR: South Ave. to Hort St. #555 \$519,900 (052000NEW)

Call For More Information!



Invite Nancy in, and she'll bring results!

Nancy Kronheimer  
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